

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

1. (Canceled)

2. (Canceled)

3. (Canceled)

4. (Canceled)

5. (Canceled)

6. (Canceled)

7. (Currently Amended) An extendible serving utensil for serving food at a salad bar, said extendible serving utensil comprising:

a) a retractable tether housing member;

b) a salad bar and a sneeze shield, positioned above and extending over said salad bar;

[[b]] c) a fixed coupling means defined by an eye with a shaft extending therefrom, said shaft being passed through a hole in [[a]] said sneeze shield ~~extending over a salad bar~~ for coupling said fixed coupling means to said sneeze shield, said retractable tether housing member coupled to said eye for elevating said retractable tether housing member above said salad bar;

[[c]] d) a tether member connected to said retractable tether housing member at one end thereof for retracting said tether member into said retractable tether housing member, said tether member having a free end; and

e) a food serving utensil coupled to said free end of said tether member.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Canceled)

10. (Currently amended) An extendible food serving utensil for serving food at a salad bar, said extendible food serving utensil comprising:

a) a retractable, extendible tether housing member;

b) a salad bar and a container for supporting food, supported on said salad bar ~~means for coupling said retractable tether housing member to an external mounting means for elevating said retractable tether housing member above food served at a salad bar, said external mounting means defined by a base plate with a shaft extending at normal therefrom and said shaft includes a connector at a distal end of said shaft and said retractable tether housing member is coupled to said connector at said distal end ;~~

c) a shaft, with a first end and a distal end, coupled to said container at said first end and extending at normal from said container, said distal end having a connector means for receiving said retractable, extendible tether housing member and for retaining said retractable, extendible tether housing member above food supported in said container ~~tether member connected to said retractable tether housing member at one end thereof, for retraction of said tether member into said retractable tether housing member, said tether member having a free end ; [[and]]~~

d) a tether member connected to said retractable extendible tether housing member at an end thereof for retracting said tether member into said retractable extendible tether housing member, said tether member having a free end; and

e) a food serving utensil coupled to said free end of said tether member.

11. (Currently amended) An extendible food serving utensil as in Claim 10 and in which said shaft is a two piece element with a male connector and a female connector.

12. (Canceled)

13. (Canceled)

14.(Withdrawn) An improved salad bar or the like for serving food in spaced containers and having a sneeze shield extending over said spaced containers but spaced from said spaced containers, said salad bar including serving utensils for self service of food served in said spaced containers, said improvement comprising:

a) a retractable tether device having a tether means with a first end coupled to said retractable tether device and having a free end;

b) a serving utensil coupled to said free end of said tether means; and

c) said retractable tether secured to said sneeze shield.

15.(Withdrawn) An improved salad bar as in Claim 14 wherein said serving utensil is a serving spoon.

16.(Withdrawn) An improved salad bar as in Claim 14 wherein said serving utensil is a pair of tongs.

17.(Withdrawn) An improved salad bar as in Claim 14 wherein said retractable tether device is secured to an under surface of said sneeze shield by a suction cup means.

18.(Withdrawn) An improved salad bar as in Claim 14 wherein said retractable device is secured to an under side of said sneeze shield by a fixed connector means.

19.(Withdrawn) An improved salad bar or the like for serving food in spaced containers, said salad bar including serving utensils for self service of food served in said spaced containers, said improvement

comprising:

a) a retractable tether device with a tether means connected to said retractable tether device at one end and said tether means having a free end coupled to a serving utensil;

b) a shaft means secured, at one end, to a container of said spaced containers and having a distal end extending above said container; and

c) said retractable tether device connected to said distal end of said shaft means.

20. (Withdrawn) An improved salad bar as in Claim 19 where said shaft means includes a base plate means at said one end for securing said shaft means vertically in said container.

21. (Withdrawn) An improved salad bar as in Claim 19 wherein said shaft means includes a clamp means at said one end for securing said shaft to said container.

22. (Canceled)

23. (Canceled)

24. (Canceled)

25. (Previously presented) A retractable serving utensil system for partaking food from containers on a salad bar; said retractable serving utensil system comprising;

a) a retractable tether member having an extendible, retractable tether, said tether having a first end and a free end;

b) a salad bar for supporting a container thereon and a sneeze shield over said salad bar and means for coupling said retractable tether member above said container on said salad bar wherein said means for coupling said retractable tether member to said sneeze shield is an eye hook with a threaded shaft and said

threaded shaft extends through a hole in said sneeze shield and is held in place by a threaded nut; and

c) a serving utensil member and a means for coupling said serving utensil member to said free end of said extendible, retractable tether.

26. (Currently amended) A retractable food serving utensil system for partaking food from containers on a salad bar, said retractable serving utensil system comprising:

a) a retractable tether member having an extendible, retractable tether, said tether having a first end and a free end;

b) a means for elevating said retractable tether member above a container supported on a salad bar wherein said means for elevating includes a shaft having a first end and a distal end and said first end of said shaft includes a means for securing said shaft to said container supported on said salad bar and said distal end includes a means for securing said retractable tether member to said shaft; and

c) a food serving utensil and a means for coupling said food serving utensil to said free end of said extendible, retractable tether.

27. (Currently amended) A retractable food serving utensil system for partaking food from containers on a salad bar, said retractable food serving utensil system comprising:

a) a retractable tether member having an extendible, retractable tether, said tether having a first end and a free end;

b) a means for elevating said retractable tether member above a container supported on a salad bar wherein said means for elevating includes a shaft having a first end and a distal end and said first end of said shaft includes a means for securing said shaft to said container supported on said salad bar and said distal end includes a housing for receiving and securing said

retractable tether member to said shaft; and

c) a food serving utensil and a means for coupling said food serving utensil to said free end of said extendible, retractable tether.

28.(Currently amended) A retractable food serving utensil system as in Claim 27 and in which said housing for receiving and securing said retractable tether means includes a hole for permitting said extendible, retractable tether to extend out of said housing and said housing further includes a cover means for securing said retractable tether means in said housing.

29.(Previously Presented) A retractable serving utensil system as in Claim 25 wherein said serving utensil member is a spoon.

30.(Previously Presented) A retractable serving utensil system as in Claim 25 wherein said serving utensil member is a pair of tongs for serving food.

31.(Currently amended) A retractable food serving utensil system as in Claim 26 wherein said serving utensil is a spoon

32.(Currently amended) A retractable food serving utensil system as in Claim 26 wherein said serving utensil is a pair of tongs for serving food.

33.(Currently amended) A retractable food serving utensil system as in Claim 27 wherein said serving utensil is a spoon.

34.(Currently amended) A retractable food serving utensil system as in Claim 27 wherein said food serving utensil is a pair of tongs for serving food.